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## **News Paper an Apt Resource for Enhancing English Skills among Undergraduate Students**

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### **Abstract**

*In India, learning English has become the order of the day. With the emergence of global economy, the need for getting prospective job opportunities has made English to acquire the language with various skills. Students also have started to realize the role of English and are aware of the fact that they cannot dream of a bright career by keeping themselves away or self-centered with traditional methods of learning English skills. In the present day, the resources available to teach and learn English are numerous from books to electronic sources. English teachers across the country look beyond many innovative methods to teach English effectively and practically for equipping them professionally. However, most of the graduates lack interest in learning the monotonous exercises either in books or in electronic resources. In this context, more than teaching fundamental elements what is required is its application and various other skills. Hence, for undergraduate students, learning English can be adapted with News paper. This paper aims at discussing briefly the role of News paper in language learning than merely being an information genre. The paper further discusses as how to ensure successful acquisition of an English language through the easily available, different patterns and activity based and skill based package News paper. This News paper resource of learning English makes the undergraduate students to learn the skills enthusiastically than a uniformed packed learning.*

## **Introduction**

English language is no more a neglected language or a colonial language. Gone are the days when learning English was considered as the hall mark of an elite society. Today, the undergraduate students have started to realize the role of English in their job opportunities. The rural undergraduate students are aware of the fact that the urban undergraduate students are grabbing jobs mostly based on their master of English language. The rural undergraduate students have realized that they cannot dream of a bright career by keeping negative thought of English language. Hence, the undergraduate students urban or rural having better proficiency in other subjects or employability skills have started to learn English seriously and are motivated by the anticipated role of English. Hence, in India learning English has become the order of the day.

At this juncture, it is the essential duty of the English language teachers to guide the students to excel professionally. The English language teachers have to play a vital role in implementing innovative approach to revitalize the professional caliber of language, and teach through multiple reflective learning strategies. The present day English language teachers fall between the old and the new order of the age. The students already seem more comfortable in the New age. English teachers across the country look beyond many innovative methods to teach English effectively and practically for equipping them professionally.

According to Goodwyn, “An age of technology that seems to threaten many stabilities also serves to remind us that literature is a great source of wisdom, not solely about the past but equally about the future”(3). In a country where English is taught as second language, mostly the teacher-centered method is followed. In undergraduate level should English be taught in the old traditional method? is a serious question to be analyzed. English teaching has to more students –centered learning which equips with new skills. New fresh methods are very essential rather than a traditional form of learning. Because, today’s learners are hooked more on to social networking sites and enjoy most of

the time in blogging, twitter, whatsapp and googling Armstrong claimed that, “traditional education ignores or suppresses learner responsibility”(98). The foremost step of English language teachers is to guide intelligently and thought provokingly in an indirect way. Hence, students- centered learning should be focused rather than teacher-centered learning

In undergraduate level, English as a second language would certainly yield rich dividends both to the teacher and to the students. The students must not be confined to text book learning at the same time they should learn for the future required needs which is really a challenging task. A close look shows that the undergraduate students before entering the threshold of the college would have learnt all the basic fundamentals of English language. For they have studied the English language for twelve years. However, it is necessary s to impose the same in undergraduate syllabus or class. Instead, the students should be prepared for a technical career. They syllabi and material should be innovative and improvise teaching as a collaborative activity in which students of undergraduate level are equal partners in the teaching learning process.

Learning English in undergraduate level should be student –centered learning and must allow students to actively participate in discovery learning processes from an autonomous view point. Nowadays, a variety of hands on activities are administered in order to promote successful learning. With the use of activity learning skills, students are capable of achieving lifelong learning goals and enhance motivation in the classroom.

Moreover, student –centered learning focuses on researching material, pertinent and active learning. This has to be strongly encouraged rather rote learning or memorization. However, most of the undergraduate students lack interest in learning the monotonous exercises given in the prescribed books or in electronic resources. Along, more than teaching fundamental elements what is required is its application skill. Instead of adopting the run of the mill clichéd approach to teaching, a teacher should adopt a dynamic approach.

The role of English texts helps to improve language skills that cannot be underestimated. But in undergraduate level of teaching the English teacher should not rely on texts alone. One should use from everyday life to enable the learners identify and understand the functions of the language. Because a language is primarily a mode of communication and the requisite of mastering a language is to possess all the skills. The prescribed texts make it artificial and boredom. In essence, the teacher's goal to equip him professionally becomes a failure. During the learning process the teacher has to guide students into making new interpretations of the learning material. Hence, for undergraduate students learning English can be adapted with English Newspaper.

Newspaper more than an information genre, it is a simple tool to enhance all the skills of a language. Newspaper is a day book that records significant happening of the day. They are not prepared years before but daily updated tool. Nowadays, English newspaper is available easily in Internet and in printed form in a concession rate at every part of the country where college is situated. It can be a resource for undergraduate students to update and ensures to learn the acquisition of English language Newspaper as a resource of learning English make the undergraduate students to learn all the skills enthusiastically and skillfully than a uniformed packed learning. This kind of learning holds the learner accountable for production of knowledge that he or she is capable of producing. This also fosters rural student's interest in learning English. The teacher evaluates the learner by providing honest and timely feedback on individual progress.

In the beginning of an undergraduate class every English teacher insists and motivates the students to read newspaper to improve their communication skill, but the students lack interest and have a wrong notion that it is difficult and meant only for improving their vocabulary. If newspaper is used as a resource to learn the language, the student get accustomed and they will definitely overthrow their prejudice and definitely start to read regularly. One has to remember that anything made compulsory in the initial stage brings fruitful results.

Newspaper with its vibrant dimension plays a significant role in learning a language. Newspaper resource differs from other forms of communication in several ways. Many consider it as only an information genre but apart it plays a multipurpose role in updating the changes of a language. In Tamil language an average learner with the basic knowledge develops and enhances the language because of reading newspaper rather reading a classic genre. As a result, Newspaper more than an information genre emphasis to learn a language from the practical, social, cultural, and political life.

The first language skill to be adopted in a newspaper resource is reading. It has a technique called analogy. They are comparisons of something familiar to unfamiliar. Any easy news item can be asked to read aloud or by silent reading. During loud reading one can practice over pronunciation, tone, pauses and Intonation. The teacher facilitator can guide student –centered the reader and the class. Instead of reading a regular monotonous prose passage, newspaper provides a challenge to read for it improves their competency of the language.

Reading newspaper in class helps to understand the structure of the sentence, organization of a passage and keeps aware of the social and political background. It also helps the readers and listeners to be familiar with the choice of words for its use in exact context. In addition, they can enrich the word building ability. Vocabulary becomes permanent if it is transformed to speaking, thinking and writing. Learning vocabulary in a direct word study will have the concomitant effect of making it easier for the students to read regularly and helps to reinforce and supplement the vocabulary they have learned.

Reading also helps to make familiar with figures of speech, phrase and idiomatic expression when often repeated by the reader it enriches the language. This kind of face to face reading and listening with the teacher facilitator makes the students involve and enrich the communication of the language in his corporate career. Thus, a student after his graduation feels confident to speak. This confidence

skill provides him to address fearless discussions in various business meetings at his corporate field. In short, a student enhances his professional image in and across the organization.

In order to increase mastery of expression of the language reading, listening and writing express oneself more clearly. As the students keep in touch with newspaper as a resource, it will help them distinctive in most of the concepts which apply primarily to written communication but can be applied to spoken also. An undergraduate student can acquire a combination of adequate technical competence in writing also through news paper.

The language used in newspaper is a powerful language of communication. It is the form of the twenty first century language. As a consequence of technological innovation and social change, the newspaper language reflects the new kinds of text of the global communication technologies. This effective language consists of many elements such as vocabulary, grammar, structure and pronunciation. Ian M.Ross says, “The ability to speak and write clearly is not important to the communication of technical concepts, it is an essential part of the innovation process itself. Translating an idea into the written word is one of the better ways of validating the soundness of one’s thinking” (Sharon 62). Language used in written composition brings the passive vocabulary into active use. Hence, appropriate words are used to express what they want.

The newspaper language has been extraordinarily a response to the demand for productivity and one can see that English adapts itself to suit new working practices. The undergraduate students need grammatical competence of exceptional quality to survive in the corporate organization. Hence, the emphasis on learning grammatical structure of the sentence helps to learn the different levels of language structure. Thus, the students acquire advanced vocabulary and grammatical precision in order to develop higher order of the language.

The grammar lesson emerges out of the language material being used to develop the skills of reading as well as to form the basis of the grammar lesson. Learning grammar is often associated with

boredom and mechanical exercises, but when newspaper used as resource it is consciously learnt with explicit set of rules and principles. In newspaper the main objective to teach grammar is to improve productive language skills and make them better users of the language. Hence, the language teacher can design newspaper material for any kind of functional and descriptive grammar in their language classes.

Newspaper as a resource to learn grammar helps the students to be educated with grammatical competence. In order to develop higher thinking they can be necessarily be taught with advanced components. The main objective is to apply grammatical skill to improve productive language skills and make them better users of language. It also adds freshness and motivation among the learners. There are number of ways to use newspaper. In the advanced level speaking on a current topic, or explaining a headline comprehension, hints development, story, interview, making an advertisement, project, essay writing, explaining to the photos and circulars, notice board presentation, letters to the editor can be worked with variety. For, the beginner level, identifying parts of speech, functional units, identifying kinds, parts and forms of sentence, antonym, synonym, tense, voice, kinds of speech, numbers, Idiomatic expression can be dealt keeping any news passage of the newspaper as a model exercise.

A student can cut out any news passage from the newspaper for any of the above grammar items mentioned and work out the exercise in a note book. In the left hand side of the note book the news passage text can be pasted and on the right side of the note book the exercise can be worked out. As the exercises vary from individual student, it provides originality and everyone compulsorily works on their own. There is no room for circulating the answers from a few academic sound learners or blindly copying the answers from the prescribed key notes. The English teacher is able to address student needs, and over all engagement in the learning material, creates a feedback loop that encourages self- discovery and education. This kind of learning exercise makes the students to learn

with interest. This also provides mental discipline allows clarity and enhances critical thinking in the process of acquiring a language

Thus, newspaper provides ample resource for learning the skills of a language. At school level this kind of learning will be complicated but for undergraduate level, it provides encouragement to identify achievable results and work towards autonomous learning. At the outset, this kind of learning helps the students unlearn the cut copy method and gives serious thought to learn and motivates the students to read the newspaper regularly. Finally it transfers learner's common experience into meaningful learning situations.

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